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Imbolc for the Covenstead

Erin

First, the cleansing. We do covenstead cleansing on this day, part because of the (somewhat) purificatory nature of Imbolc, and partly because it coincides with the date a Japanese custom called yokubrai, if memory serves correctly, is carried out. Yokubarai means the same as exorcism, and is done with beans! More about that in a minute.

I give as many parts to the cleansing as there are people to perform them. The last house cleansing we did had about 10 people take part and I found something for each of them to do. But that wasn't easy. Lessee, I think the most necessary elements for me to go around with are salt water, incense and beans. But I've also had people waving away negative energy with brooms and wands. I've had them sprinkle with salt water, and with water in which basil had been soaking for awhile. I've had people carry around bells, incense and candles (not quite bell, book and candle, but close enough <g>). I live in a loft apartment, so we start in the closet up there, partly because its in the heart of the house, partly because I like the humorous aspect of coming out of the closet to do the blessing. Anyway, we banish in a counterclockwise direction, single file, sprinkling, censing, or chanting into each corner each mirror, light fixture, appliance or outlet, as well as the walls themselves.

In other words, we banish negative energy from all things giving ingress or egress from the house, as well as walls and mirrors. Sometimes we just take in everything in one room at once if its small, or everything along one wall-saves time. I usually come at the end of the line throwing beans at things (I find beans for MONTHS afterward) and chanting in Japanese: Funiki ga ire; oni ga soto! (Good luck, come in; devils, begone!) Then someone follows me making a banishing pentagram with an athame. We circle around the house in a counter-clockwise spiral till were back where we started-downstairs by that time. Then we go back upstairs for the blessing part. For the most part, this uses the same tools, but no beans this time, and we go clockwise. We bless the corners, walls, outlets, appliances, and mirror, doors and windows. We concentrate on blessing and on making a seal that cannot be broken on the windows and doors especially. I usually come last and seal everything with a pentagram drawn by my athame. Then I draw a large permanent circle around the house, call in the elements, and ask the Lord and Lady to guard and bless the house for another year.

Consecrating the dirt is simpler. I usually buy potting soil and place it in the center of the circle. All the ritual is done around it. We usually consecrate it just before we do cakes and wine by placing our hands on it and channeling energy into it. Then everyone takes some home.

The last thing we do is to make up Bridgets bed. We take some long grass, or herbs and fold them into the shape of a doll about a foot long We dress her up and name her Bridget. Then we make her a soft bed of some grasses (all on a sheet of newspaper, of course, so the Virgo HPS doesn't get her nose, or her carpet, bent out of shape), lay her down and put a phallic image in the bed with her. We use a large dried seed pod with a rounded head for this. Then we place some of the consecrated dirt on a sheet of newspaper beside her. She was put by the hearth in days of yore, but, alas, I have no fireplace! In the morning, if there are prints in the dirt (ashes), it foretold a favorable year. When we did it last year, I swear there was the image of the phallic figure in the dirt, though no one had moved him! And it was a very good year for the coven, all in all.

Hope you can use some of this.
Blessings, Erin

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